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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION

¶1. SUMMARY: Omani dailies focused this week on the Mumbai attacks and transition of administrations. Government daily "Oman" signaled that the Mumbai attacks require a united, international response to the evolving threat of terrorism. Private Arabic daily "Al Watan" commented that American policy in the Middle East will not change under President Obama America's traditional interests in oil and Israel. "Oman" challenged President Bush's claim that the Middle East is better off today than at the beginning of his administration. END SUMMARY.

Cooperation on Terror "Necessary and Urgent"

¶2. On November 29, government Arabic daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000), called for a coordinated global effort to combat terrorism in the wake of the Mumbai attacks. According to "Regional and International Cooperation is Necessary to Combat Terrorism":

"Although India is going to get through this tragedy, we cannot ignore the games that are being played to ignite a war between India and its neighbor. It is important to address the growing global concern of the spread of terrorist acts and associated crimes. It has become necessary and urgent to work sincerely to expand cooperation and coordination among states to address terrorism and contain its repercussions. The scope of the Mumbai attacks clearly shows that terrorist groups and the military tactics they use are evolving. It is necessary to work at all levels to confront these groups for the stability and security of all people."

"American Policy has One and Only One Face"

¶3. On December 2, private Arabic daily "Al Watan" (circulation 42,000) predicated that American policy in the Middle East will not change under President Obama, explaining that America's interests in the region will always remain the same. According to "American Policy has Only One Face":

"Now that Barack Obama has been elected President, many wonder, 'will American policy change towards the Middle East, particularly in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan?' The history of Arab-American relations shows us that there is only one answer: American policy has one and only one face. American policies, be they Republican or Democratic, have not changed in the Middle East since World War II. The U.S. has always focused on oil, the security of Israel and, previously, protection from the expansion of communism. American policy towards the Middle East will not change. Israel is the only priority, central to U.S. strategy whether under Obama or McCain. Iraqis and Arabs should understand that America is operating according to its own interests, and not humanitarian or moral values. It is time for Arabs to put their destinies in their own hands, and not to leave their lives and sovereignty to the interests

of others."

"Political and Economic Chaos"

¶4. "Oman" on December 7 accused President Bush of continuing to lie about justifications for the Iraq war, challenging a statement attributed to the President that the Middle East is a better place now than when his administration began. According to "When Will These Lies End?":

"When the United Nations Security Council, as well as major regional powers like the European Union, grant a license to kill humans, to invade other countries, and to destroy infrastructure, it is natural for the world to fall into political and economic chaos. The American President George W. Bush continues boldly to lie about the justifications of war against Iraq. In fact, Bush states that he is going to leave his successor a better Middle East than what it was eight years ago. It seems as if he is talking about a different Middle East than what its residents know today: one full of problems since he became President."

GRAPPO